



State of California Seismic Safety Commission Biannual Newsletter January through June 2006



Commission Revises the Commercial Property Owner's Guide

At the January 12, 2006 meeting, the Commission assigned an ad hoc committee charged with revising the *Commercial Property Owner's Guide to Earthquake Safety*. Members of the Committee include Commissioners Gary McGavin, Arul Arulmoli, Daniel Shapiro, and Andrew Adelman. The format of the Guide will be changed to resemble the *Commission's Homeowner's Guide to Earthquake Safety*. New material on non-structural components and furnishings and some of general updates throughout the guide will be included. The revised Guide will be published and available on the web in early July.

Commission Releases 100 Year Time Line

Commissioner Dennis Mileti organized and arranged for a grant from the Public Entity Risk Institute (PERI), to create a time line featuring the progression of earthquake safety in California from 1906 through 2005. Claire B. Rubin and Associates, a disaster research consulting firm, performed the work. Ms. Rubin's firm pioneered a series of disaster-related charts which were used for educational and training tools. The Commission's timeline identifies all of California laws, regulations, policies, programs and organizations directed toward seismic safety that were created in the last 100 years. The timeline was a big success and was distributed to all attendees at the 100 Anniversary Conference in San Francisco. To view *100 Years of Seismic Safety Legislation in California* visit the Commission's website at www.seismic.ca.gov

San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's Water System Improvement Program (WSIP)

Under AB 1823 (Chapter 841, 2002) the Seismic Safety Commission (SSC) is required to review all changes made to the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's (SFPUC's) plans for improvements to the Hetch Hetchy water delivery system that may significantly impact seismic safety risk. The Commission appointed an ad hoc committee that reviewed the proposed changes and provided a draft report to the full Commission at the June 2006 meeting. The Commission adopted the ad hoc committee's review of the project's potential seismic safety impacts. The Commission will submit their review to the SFPUC, the Governor, and the Legislature. Members of the ad hoc committee were Commissioners Larry Klein, Daniel Shapiro, and Bruce Clark. The Commission provided five findings and six future considerations within the review. You can see the findings in detail at the Commission's website at www.seismic.ca.gov

Pictured below (from left to right) Brian Sadden, Paul Mazza, and Tony Irons from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission appeared before the Seismic Safety Commission.



A Tribute to Senator Alfred E. Alquist

Retired State Senator Al Alquist, 97, of Santa Clara passed away Monday, March 27, 2006. The 34-year veteran of the California Legislature was born on August 2, 1908 in Memphis, TN. Prior to serving four years in the California Assembly beginning in 1962, and the Senate for 30 years until 1996, Senator Alquist had a 40-year career with the railroads.



Seismic Commissioners and staff expressed deep and heartfelt condolences to the passing of Senator Alquist. In the statement of condolence:

“Our thoughts are with Senator Elaine Alquist for her enormous loss. Senator Alfred Alquist touched all our lives and it was an honor to know him. Most importantly, the Commission feels honored to serve out his vision and legacy on a vast array of seismic safety issues for California. His accomplishments and passion for the safety of the public were tremendous. He is directly responsible for saving lives in California and around the world. He was our champion for earthquake safety.

The Commission will not let his legacy be in vain, but will continue supporting his efforts. He laid a strong foundation and his courage and leadership will be profoundly missed by all whose lives he touched.”

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Commission Commemorates the 35th Anniversary of the Sylmar Earthquake

At the February 9, 2006 meeting, the Seismic Safety Commission recognized the 35th anniversary of the San Fernando Earthquake. Invited experts examined the advances in seismology, earthquake engineering, and emergency response since the earthquake and the challenges that still lay ahead for California.

On the morning of February 9, 1971 (6:00 a.m. PST) the 6.5 magnitude San Fernando earthquake rocked the northern San Fernando Valley near Sylmar. Seismologists refer to this event as the San Fernando earthquake since it ruptured a segment of the San Fernando fault along the San Gabriel Mountains. It was referred to as the 'Sylmar Quake' by local media outlets because the worst damage was to the Olive View Medical Center, located in Sylmar. The San Fernando earthquake claimed 65 lives, caused more than a half a billion dollars in damage, destroyed two hospitals and a freeway interchange and damaged the Lower Van Norman Dam.

Among the speakers at the February 9th Commission meeting were representatives from U.S. Geological Survey, the Southern California Earthquake Center, Youssef and Associates, UCLA Pacific Earthquake Engineering Research Center, Applied Technology Council, Seismic Warning Systems, Los Angeles County, and the Business and Industry Council for Emergency Planning and Preparedness.

Through these presentations, individuals remembered the San Fernando earthquake, and provided expert opinions and discussions on advances in hazard assessment, earthquake engineering, and partnerships in emergency management that will help mitigate future losses.

The Commission meeting was held in Los Angeles City Hall, John Ferraro City Council Chambers.

James Lee Witt's Comprehensive National Solution to the Threat of Natural Catastrophes

At the April 2006 meeting, Mr. James Lee Witt, former director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency appeared before the Commission asking for support of HR 4366—a comprehensive national solution to the threat of natural catastrophes.

Since America has experienced personal tragedy and economic devastation of natural disasters which has resulted in loss of human life and adverse economic consequences, the Commission encourages Americans to take responsibility for protecting their families and properties, and for Congress to establish a natural disaster plan that builds upon the solid foundation of state regulation, maximizing the role of the private market, encouraging personal safety and responsibility, recognizing the important role of mitigation and producing a comprehensive solution to the threat of natural catastrophes for the benefit of all Americans.

The Commission Releases Report on California's Emergency Response to a Major Earthquake

The Urban Search and Rescue Emergency Advisory Committee of the Seismic Safety Commission formed again to revisit the issues and recommendations presented in the original 2003 Report and to include responses to recent disasters such as local mudslides, flooding, mass transportation accidents, the 2004 Southeast Asia Tsunami, and the 2005 Gulf Coast Hurricanes. The report, *California's Emergency Response to a Major Earthquake*, provides findings and recommendations and are available on the Commission's website. Members of the Committee were: Donald Manning (Commissioner), Jeff Sedivec (Commissioner), Donald Parker, Jim Hone, Charley Hurley, Jim Pearson, Kevin Southerland, Jeff Metzinger, Mark Hoffman, John Tripp, Edward Bushman, Dave Lesh, Mike McGroarty, Robert Curry, and John McKently.

Commission Testifies Before the Little Hoover Commission

In an effort to review emergency preparedness in California, the State's Little Hoover Commission (LHC) held numerous hearings in early 2006. State Seismic Safety Commissioner Dennis Miletic appeared before the Little Hoover Commission on March 23, 2006 and addressed the following issues: (1) the need to match state efforts and funding for preparedness and mitigation to the levels of risks in California; (2) the need for stable funding; (3) how all hazards insurance could create cash reserves for mega-earthquake recovery and reconstruction as well as provide incentives for household mitigation; (4) the need for non-traditional and innovative preparedness for responding to mega-earthquakes; (5) the valuable role of expert oversight in developing appropriate state policy regarding hazards; (6) ways to leverage resources and increase private sector participation in preparedness and mitigation; and (7) the character of public education that works to yield public safety actions.

The LHC released its report in April entitled, *Safeguarding the Golden State: Preparing for Catastrophic Events*. In the report, the LHC urges California's elected officials to make catastrophic preparedness a priority and asks leaders to come together to ensure that the State is truly prepared. To view the report, visit LHC's website www.lhc.ca.gov

Commission Releases Annual Report

As stated in Section 8870.1 of the Seismic Safety commission Act, the Commission is required to report annually to the Governor and the Legislature on its activities and progress relating to earthquake hazard reduction. The Annual Report covering the year 2005 was distributed in January 2006 and is available on the Commission's website.

EARTHQUAKE TIP

Question: What foods are not ideal to reserve for emergencies?

Answer: Salty foods (they'll make you thirsty) and caffeinated foods (they'll dehydrate you).

The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake Remembered

San Francisco was forever changed by the massive earthquake and fires that struck early in the morning on April 18, 1906. One hundred years later, individuals from around the world came together in San Francisco to commemorate the disaster and recovery, review what we have learned, and discuss what we can do to further prepare. More than 4,000 were in attendance. The conference, timed to the centennial of San Francisco's 1906 earthquake, focused on California. However, the lessons and policies learned related to quake-sensitive regions worldwide. Governor Schwarzenegger kicked off the conference with his supportive speech about California's commitment to seismic safety.



Henry Renteria, Director of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services Director appears on left with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger at the 100 Year Conference. Photo provided by Robert A. Eplett, OES. Photo below provided by former Commissioner Linden Nishinaga.



The Commission formally Joins Western States Seismic Policy Council (WSSPC)

At the March 9, 2006 Commission meeting, Ms. Patricia Sutch, Executive Director of WSSPC appeared before the Commission to formally invite the Commission to become members of the Council. WSSPC's mission is to develop, recommend and support seismic policies and programs through the western region. Ms. Sutch explained that the organization is an earthquake consortium funded by FEMA and its goal is to reduce earthquake losses by facilitating meetings and providing forums where people can exchange information and share ideas about programs. WSSPC held two meetings with state seismic boards in recent years and decided it would be beneficial to the organization to invite all state boards and commissions to join. There are no membership fees and WSSPC will pay some travel expenses for attending the annual conference. The Commission agreed unanimously to join WSSPC and looks forward to participating in its next annual conference.

Report to Commission by California State Architect

State Architect David Thorman appeared before the Seismic Safety Commission at the March 2006 Meeting. Mr. Thorman said his goals for the Division of the State Architect (DSA) include providing better services, with more timely, consistent and accurate plan reviews; filling critical staff vacancies; revitalizing communications with stakeholders; collaborating with community colleges; launching the DSA Academy to train staff and consultants and provide resources for others; continuing the excellence program; and working on amendments and code updates in preparation for California's adoption of the 2006 International Building Code. As longer-term goals, Mr. Thorman identified fully electronic offices, balanced resources and workload, and a state-wide built environmental policy.

The State Architect is charged with reporting annually to the Seismic Safety Commission in conformance with requirements under the Seismic Safety Act.

Commission Recognizes Meeting Reporter Cynthia Judy

At the March 2006 Commission meeting, Ms. Cynthia Judy was recognized by the Seismic Safety Commission for her 20 years of outstanding service in recording, transcribing and summarizing the monthly Commission meetings and hearings. The Commission presented Ms. Judy with an engraved desk clock as a small token of appreciation for her enormous dedication and talent. The Commission has relied on her services in creating a thorough public record of all its meetings and hearings. Ms. Judy has the special ability to translate technical language into minutes that are easily understood.

Ms. Judy provides reporting services to a number of government and private business clients. In addition, she has a California law degree and does legal consulting as time permits.

The Commission Forms Ad Hoc Committee to Review California Public School Safety and the Field Act

At the June meeting, the Commission formed an ad hoc committee to review California's public school safety and the Field Act. The Field Act was one of the first pieces of construction legislation, triggered by the Long Beach earthquake of 1933. The Act took the enforcement of building codes out of the hands of local jurisdictions and gave it to the state. It requires the state's Department of General Services to regulate the construction of public school buildings. The Commission has visited issues surrounding the Field Act many times and believes it protects children and staff from death and injury in public schools grades K-14. The Field Act protects the public's investment in school buildings. Recent attempts have been made to exempt some public schools from Field Act requirements. The Commission will hold a series of workshops over the next few months and the ad hoc committee will hold additional meetings to collect information as needed. It is the intention of the Commission to adopt a policy paper on the relevance of the Field Act once the committee work is completed. The first workshop is scheduled for July 13, 2006 at the State Capitol in Sacramento.

Commercial Property Owner's Guide to Earthquake Safety

2006 Edition



Published by the
California
Seismic Safety
Commission

State of
California

Arnold Schwarzenegger,
Governor

SSC No. 06-02



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Owner's Guide to Earthquake Safety—
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